

1922?

I. W. W. Preach Violence



By NOEL SARGENT



*“The question of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’
does not concern us.”*
—Vincent St. John, I. W. W.

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\$245
I7
1919p

DO THE I. W. W. STAND FOR VIOLENCE?

We have all heard recently lots of statements that the I. W. W. stand for violence and destruction of property and violation of laws. But the I. W. W. deny this. Thus, an editorial in the New Unionist, Seattle, July 6, 1918, refers to "the acts of violence falsely imputed to the I. W. W." And George F. Vandever, their attorney, is quoted (Christian Science Monitor, April 3, 1918) as saying: "If by sabotage you mean destruction, the I. W. W. has never stood for that. It has never advocated violence. Indeed, it has discouraged both." We have a right, then, to examine the past as well as the present utterance and acts of the I. W. W. to see where they stand on these matters, since Vandever claims that they have NEVER stood for destruction or violence.

THE GENERAL STRIKE.

The I. W. W. claim that they are going to be able to establish their industrialist, syndicalist (they are a branch of the world-wide syndicalist movement) regime as a result of the general strike. All industry will be tied up and then taken over by the proletariat, peaceably or, more probably, by force; certainly in violation of all existing laws. This is the I. W. W. program. But if the general strike or any strike they call should fail they will resort to sabotage.

WHAT SABOTAGE IS.

Let me quote some of the syndicalist writers to show just what they mean by this term.

Walker C. Smith in his book "Sabotage," widely circulated by the I. W. W., says: "Sabotage is the destruction of profits to gain a definite, revolutionary, economic end. It has many forms. It may mean the destruction of raw materials . . . the spoiling of a finished product . . . the destroying of machinery or the disarrangement of a whole machine where that machine is, the one upon which the other machines are dependent for material."

Sabot is a French word, meaning a wooden shoe. The term sabotage originated as meaning the throwing of this shoe into a

machine to destroy its usefulness in time of strikes.

C. E. Payne, editor of the *New Solidarity*, in an article in the *Internationalist*, May, 1918, said: "The acts of workers who are employed for wages, and which go by the general name of 'sabotage', have two aspects. The aspect that presents itself to employers is one of destruction of property and violation of contracts [Payne does not deny that this is what occurs], while the other aspect presents itself to the workers as so fundamentally necessary that it is accepted and practiced by them without question." Again: [italics mine] "It is this self-protection, *in whatever form*, that is known by the general name of sabotage."

WANTON DESTRUCTION ADVOCATED.

Payne, as the editor of the leading I. W. W. paper, has an undoubted right to speak for that organization. He says: "Sabotage is a Fact in modern production for profit, and philosophizing and law making will not abolish or alter it. The only workers who will not practice it are those who are in such a 'dim-eyed, narrow-chested state of being' that they are no longer able to protect themselves, and have lost their desire to do so."

He declares that sabotage includes, among other things, "the wanton destruction of property." Read over the definition given by Smith previously and you will see that Sabotage does include DESTRUCTION despite the claim of Vanderveer when he was trying to free the men on trial in Chicago. Haywood describes an actual instance of sabotage; the placing deliberately of bedbugs in hotels.

John Graham Brooks, the sociologist, in his "American Syndicalism, the I. W. W.", says: "The Truth about sabotage is that ITS ESSENCE IS DESTRUCTION. All the phrases about mere passive resistance . . . all this does not hide the fact that the machinery of production is stopped and to that extent production (wealth) is destroyed."

PRODUCTS MADE WORTHLESS.

In northern saw mills timber lengths have been changed so that only misfits were left for the planned structure. Logs were so laid

in the sawing that value was lost. Nails were driven in logs to damage the saws. These are actual instances.

Anything to decrease efficiency; to destroy rather than construct; to give the employer a dishonest return for the wages received—such are the principles of the I. W. W. “Red” Doran, one of the I. W. W. on trial in the Haywood case in 1918, declared in his testimony that he was the author of a book, “Explanation of Switch and Signal Circuits,” used by electrical workers. Doran says he found mechanics in that line of work bought a number of copies. “I quit publishing them,” he said. “I found I was making pretty efficient slaves and I quit publishing them.”

CONTRACTS OPENLY BROKEN.

The I. W. W. refuse in most cases to make contracts with employers; when they do so they declare they are justified in breaking them whenever they conceive it to be to their interest to do so. They profess scorn of workers who do abide by the contracts or agreements they have made with employers.

An editorial in *New Solidarity*, November 1, 1919, says: “It may be true that thousands of members of unions have broken contracts and defied their officials. What of it? These men are living their own lives and are responsible to no one but themselves and their class.” The *Industrial Worker*, same date, editorially said: “The I. W. W. look upon the contract as an abomination unto the Lord.”

IN FAVOR OF CHILD LABOR.

The I. W. W. would not favor or indorse laws to prohibit the employment of children or limitation of hours of work for women. A. E. Woodruff says, in one of their pamphlets, “The Advancing Proletariat,” (p. 29): “The new unionism . . . excludes no worker from the machines on any grounds of undesirability (there being no barriers of race, creed, color, sex, age, or skill).”

CHARACTER OF I. W. W. SONGS.

In the I. W. W. songs we find their view on violence expressed. [In a later edition prepared about the time of the 1918 trial they glossed over or modified or left out

songs that they thought might be objectionable. These are from the earlier edition.] Thus in their song book, p. 35, we find a song, "The Suckers Gladly Gather," which advocates and commends theft.

Another on page 18 says:

"Mr. Shark, you grafter,
You're the feller I'm after,
For I mean to comb your hair with this piece
of pipe.

"See the shark to me is walking,
Soon this gas pipe will be talking,
Then He'll remember me."

VIOLENCE INDORSED AND PRACTICED.

Harris Weinstock in his Report on the Investigation of Disturbances in San Diego, 1912, admits that in the preamble and constitution of the I. W. W. there are no statements advocating the use of force in the carrying out of its aims. On page 5, however, he says: "The commentary literature on the preamble and constitution of the I. W. W., as furnished me by its official representatives, makes plain, however, that it teaches militant action whenever such action may be deemed necessary." He should have added another qualification. They claim they practice destruction and violence, any means whatsoever, limited only by "what they can get away with." This will be made clear in later quotations from I. W. W. writers.

Thus T. Glynn, in "The Onward Sweep of the Machine Process," p. 21, says: [*italics mine*] "A virile organization, knowing *no law but that of expediency*, ready at all times and by the adoption of *any means*, to advance the interests of the working class, is an absolute necessity."

ANYTHING TO GET RESULTS.

Vincent St. John in his "History, Structure and Methods of the I. W. W.," says: "The I. W. W. aims to use *any and all tactics* that will get the results sought with the least expenditure of time and energy. The tactics used are determined solely by the power of the organization to make good in their use. The question of 'right' and 'wrong' does not concern us."

Again: "The I. W. W. advocates the use of militant 'direct action' tactics to the fullest extent of *our power to make good*. Illustrating: During strikes the workers are closely picketed and every effort made to keep the employers from getting workers into the shops. All supplies are cut off from strike bound shops. All shipments are refused or missent, delayed and lost if possible." Destruction of property by injuring or losing same is thus openly practiced, according to him.

Referring to the General Strike, a French syndicalist Guerard, said: "It will be the duty of militant workingmen, when this signal is given, to make their comrades in the trade unions leave their work. Those who continue to work on that day will be compelled, or forced to quit. . . . The general strike will be the Revolution, peaceful or not."

"BREAK THEIR BONES."

Tridonion his "The New Unionism" (p. 110) in lauding Haywood refers to the Idaho and Colorado disturbance just prior to 1916: "The federation (Western Federation of Miners) in the meantime was blowing up mills, bridges and factories." Quite an admission for a syndicalist to make.

Ettor, Massarella, and Givanitti, in the Lawrence strike a few years ago, addressed the following advice to the Italian strikers:

"Whoever invites you to return to work without advice of the striking committee is a traitor and spy and will be treated as such.

"Throw them down the stairs. Break their bones and leave them a permanent remembrance during their lives."

INCITING DISHONESTY AND LAW VIOLATION.

George F. Vanderveer, the I. W. W. attorney, formerly a prosecuting attorney in an American county, writes in the *New Solidarity*, October 25, 1919: "I accordingly advise all aliens who have ever been active in labor work that when they are arrested and booked by any officer of the law, whether city, or federal, and no matter what the charge, they shall refuse to give their true names, their true ages, their citizenship,

place of birth or any information about the time and manner of their immigration into the United States, or their movements since landing."

E. S. Nelson in a leaflet, "Appeal to Wage Workers," issued by the I. W. W. publishing bureau, Newcastle, Pa., says: "In case of a capitalist injunction against strikers, violate it, disobey it; let the strikers and others go to jail, if necessary."

FORCIBLE OPPOSITION TO LAW.

In the "Evolution of Industrial Democracy" Abner E. Woodruff, severely scored (p. 31) the "modern Socialist parties" because they have a "reverence for statute laws." This was written before the Right and Left split in the socialist party. Certainly the Left Wingers, two-thirds of American Socialists, must delight Woodruff's heart, for they certainly think little enough of "statute laws."

We believe that one parliament or congress should be succeeded in a lawful manner by another through elections and the ballot. The Russian communists expressed as follows their views on parliamentary action in other countries (quoted in *New Solidarity*, the I. W. W. paper, November 8, 1919): "The right method is to agitate and carry on propaganda by all possible means till parliament can be forcibly superseded by the Soviets."

Harrison George, one of the Chicago convicted I. W. W., wrote in *The Industrial Worker*: "We call upon the workers of America and all involved nations to meet conscription or declarations of war by general strike and insurrection." **FORCIBLE OPPOSITION TO DULY ENACTED LAW**
—Such is the I. W. W. proposal.

PATRIOTISM AND THE FLAG.

Feb. 1, 1914, Haywood in New York is declared to have said: "We don't care for the flag, and we are against patriotism. There is only one flag in the world for us, and that is the red flag."

The I. W. W. in convention in Chicago, November, 1916, adopted this resolution:

“We openly declare ourselves the determined opponents of all nationalistic sectionalism or patriotism.”

The famous I. W. W. trial in Chicago lasted 128 days, the defendants being allowed to introduce all kinds of evidence; it took the jury 65 minutes to bring in a verdict of guilty.

The I. W. W. Publishing Bureau, under date of January, 1912, circulated a pamphlet, “Patriotism and the Worker,” containing remarks of Gustave Herve, and they refer to “the universal character” of his appeal. The I. W. W. no longer circulate this pamphlet, for they know it would make it hard for them to convince people they are now patriotic—but it represents their real views today as much as in 1912.

RED FLAG EXALTED.

“Then when THE RED FLAG ON THE END OF A STICK, which represents the sacred emblem of the country passes by”

“As for us, the revolutionary socialists, *we have repudiated the flag*” “Monstrous social inequality, monstrous exploitation of man, that is what a Country is nowadays, and that is what the workers take off their hats to when the flag is carried by.”

“The Advocate-General may not like civil war, but we consider that it is the only sort of war which can possibly be of any advantage to us. For at all times it has been so wherever a social revolution has triumphed.”

“In the event, then, of an order for mobilization, we shall attempt to bring about the Revolution.”

THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE OF MINNEAPOLIS.

439 Metropolitan Bank Building.

